

"Bench the Bag" Town of Gilbert 2015 Outline



TOGETHER, WE CAN ACHIEVE ONE MILLION.

Thank you for your interest in the Town of Gilbert 2015 "Bench the Bag" program!

This year's goal is to work together as a Town and divert the equivalent of one million plastic bags!

This program is also a part of the Arizona SciTech Festival. Visit AzSciTech.com to view this and other STEM events happening in Arizona during March and February, 2015.

If your school would like to learn more about the science of recycling and the impact it has on the environment, go to gilbertrecycles.org and request Recycling Outreach & Education's presence at your school's STEM or STEAM night!

This event is running concurrently with several other Valley cities. While the processes may be similar, there will be details that are specific to the Town of Gilbert program. All participants will be held accountable for the knowledge detailed in this outline.

1. Participation Requirements

You must meet ALL of the following requirements in order to participate in the Town of Gilbert Bench the Bag program:

1. Be a school in Gilbert Public Schools or Higley Unified School District, or be a charter school that lies in the Town of Gilbert boundaries. If you are Mesa Public School or Chandler Unified School District that lies in Town of Gilbert boundaries, you will participate in the City of Mesa or City of Chandler competition, respectively.
2. Receive Town of Gilbert waste hauling services (if unsure, please call 480-503-6459).
3. Enroll up to 6th grade ONLY. This competition is only open to these elementary schools in order to keep it fair.

2. Registration

The registration form is available online at gilbertrecycles.org and must be submitted online; no email or fax entries will be accepted! Only one entry per school allowed. If more than one entry is submitted, the first entry will be used.

Registration forms are due by December 19th by midnight to ensure delivery of donated collection bags from Bashas', promotional poster for the school from TREX, and promotional magnets for each student from TREX. **No registrations will be accepted after December 19th.**

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3. Timeline

- November 1st: Registration form available at gilbertrecycles.org and through the teacher newsletter.
- December 19th, midnight: Deadline for registration form. No registration forms will be accepted after this date!
- February 9th: Start of the Town of Gilbert's Bench the Bag Spring 2015 program!
- February 13th: First collection of soft plastics from participating schools.
- February 20th: Second collection of soft plastics from participating schools.
- February 27th: Third collection of soft plastics from participating schools.
- March 6th: Final collection of soft plastics from participating schools.
- April 1st: Announcement of Bench the Bag 2015 top contributor and distribution of highlights Power Point!
- April 22nd, Earth Day: Celebration ceremony and bench presentation at top contributor school.

4. What to Collect

All collection materials must be relatively clean, completely dry, and/or empty. Please remove receipts! During the recycling process, receipts destroy the integrity of the batch and cause the entire load to be landfilled. Soft plastics accepted include:

- Plastic retail and grocery bags
- Shrink wrap (water bottle, soda, Gatorade, paper towel, toilet paper, etc.)
- Saran wrap
- Bread/bakery bags
- Produce bags
- Cereal bags
- Ziploc or resealable bags
- Dry cleaning bags
- Newspaper sleeves
- Bubble wrap
- Ice bags (must be DRY; must remove metal clips)
- Mattress bags

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5. What is Not Accepted

The point of the program is to collect soft plastics that are not already being diverted. If the soft plastic comes from a store, business, or other location where it would already be recycled, it cannot be used in this program! Examples of this are Costco pallet wrap, the bags their uncooked bakery items come in, etc. Also, the materials must have been used. If clearly unused materials are put into the collection bags they will be discounted.

Other materials, or contaminants, not accepted include:

- Receipts
- Hard plastics (water bottles, food containers, disposable coffee cups, etc.)
- Styrofoam
- Toys
- Chip bags

Please respect the educational core of this program, ALL participants, and the companies who already recycle these materials to supplement their profits through sustainability programs. Any issues will be dealt with on a case by case basis by Recycling Outreach & Education, Bashas', and TREX.

6. How to Pack Bags

It is important that schools follow the below guidelines when collecting soft plastics:

- All materials should be placed in the donated Bashas' collection bags. Individually stuffed Target, Walmart, etc. bags will not be accepted; they must be placed in the provided bags.
- Materials should be packed in the bag so that there is no extra room. However, bags should not be bursting. An optimal weight is 15-20 pounds.
- Bags should be knotted closed to prevent loss of material and clearly labeled with the school's name in Sharpie.
- Bags should be consistently in the same area (preferably the front office/administration area) each week for weighing and pick-up.

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7. Collection Day

Collection day will be each Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The staff will e-mail the school's coordinator a map of the projected collection route the Wednesday before the first collection day. All bags from all schools must be ready at 9:00 a.m. on each collection day. Any bags not ready for that week will be picked up the following week.

Staff will bring a scale with them to weigh each bag at the school. Staff will also bring a mini-me, a miniature version of a rear-loading recycling truck. After the bags are weighed, they will be thrown into the truck and compacted, where they will then head to Bashas' distribution center to be baled.

We encourage students and staff to witness and even help during the bag weighing process!

There will be no collection of soft plastics at any Bashas' locations for this program. While Bashas' will maintain their Bag Central centers, any bags brought into their stores will not be counted towards a specific school!

This is an Outreach group so there will be documentation of this program for potential use in social media. It is our understanding that parents may have signed a form at the beginning of the school year stating they do not want their child to be photographed. If students are helping the Outreach group, it is the school's responsibility to know which students cannot be in the photos. Thank you!

8. Data Distribution & Town-wide Goal

Last year, 19 participating Town of Gilbert schools collected what equated to 827,362 grocery bags! Of the 6 participating municipalities that collected approximately 15 tons of soft plastics, Gilbert contributed over 6 tons of that material. While there is no official contest between municipalities, Recycling Education & Outreach is aiming for Gilbert to be the top contributor once again!

The goal for all participating schools in the Town of Gilbert program is to collect the equivalent of one million plastic bags. Each week, Education & Outreach will update a separate goal tracking page on gilbertrecycles.org with the amount of bags all schools have contributed towards the one million!

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8. Data Distribution & Town-wide Goal (continued)

The idea is that together, all of us can make a difference in our community. The Town is united in making the world a safer, cleaner place for everyone!

Finally, to honor the Town's top contributor, on Wednesday, April 1st, the final ranking with total weight and pounds per student will be posted at gilbertrecycles.org after the winning school is alerted. Any calls, emails, or verbal requests for individual rankings at any other time will not be honored.

Please respect the program and keep your schools aiming towards the united goal. Together we can achieve one million!

9. How the Top Contributor is Determined

In order to remain equitable and eliminate the advantage any school may have with a larger enrollment, the below calculation will be used to determine the top contributor:

$$(\text{Total weight of soft plastics collected}) \div (\text{The total student enrollment on the 100}^{\text{th}} \text{ day of school})$$

The total enrollment on the 100th day of school will be taken from the registration form submitted. This number will also be crosschecked with the respected District offices. Any attempt to alter this number to give the school an unfair advantage can result in the school being eliminated from the program.

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10. Prize(s)

The top contributing school (the one that collects the most soft plastics per student) will be awarded a picnic style bench donated by TREX, the largest manufacturer of faux wood furniture made of recycled soft plastics! The bench will be delivered to the school on Earth Day, April 22nd, during a celebration ceremony.

Each participating school will receive a 1 foot x 1 foot planter made from the same soft plastic lumber made by TREX*. There are continuing talks between local vendors, including Bashas', to provide additional prizes for the spring 2015 program!

**Participatory prize is subject to change.*

Recycling Outreach & Education is here to assist you through this whole program! If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact our staff.

Together, we can achieve one million.

Bashas'



ARIZONA
SCITECH
festival

Trex



GILBERT
ARIZONA

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

**Town of Gilbert Environmental Services
Recycling Education & Outreach Team
Joslyn Marty-Recycling Administrator
Penny Minkalis & Adria Surovy-Outreach Specialists
Recycle@gilbertaz.gov
480-503-6459
Tuesday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.**